

Crops, Soils and Fertilizers

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Inquiries of Progressive Farmer readers cheerfully answered.

DR. FREEMAN'S TALKS.

XII.—The Best Plan for Clearing New Ground.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

Mr. Blake Johnston's article of July 5th is all true about sprouts not coming out any more when cut in August. I don't think the moon has anything to do with it though. Just cut all sprouts off in your pastures and other places in August and all will be well.

This reminds me to say a word about cleaning land. Many of our farmers do too much work in cleaning their land.

When you wish to clear a piece of land go into it and cut everything off, large and small growth. Leave nothing to be dug up with the grub hoe. Haul off the wood and pile the brush. Now let it alone until the first week in June. At 12 o'clock about this time when it is dry and hot, burn off. You will find afterward that everything burned and left the ground clean, trash and all.

Now mark off the land and plant in corn, covering with the hoe. If well planted, it will not need to be replanted, but will come up at once and grow very fast. When six inches or a foot high, go around the corn once with plow, then let stand until you wish to lay by; then plow out middles. In August chop down bushes, if any, and you will be surprised at the fine field of corn you have.

The next year the cleaning up will be very light to what would have been the first year. Some of the finest corn I ever made was made on land treated this way. I have used this plan for fifteen years, and saved more than half the work of clearing land. The June burning and August chopping do the work.

Crops in this section are the best the county has ever produced. All those who plowed deep with two horses are safe against rain or drought. When you cannot use a two-horse plow for any reason, run a coulter or another plow with just the point on, after the one-horse plow. One of my neighbors has followed this plan this year and it shows a big difference.

Now is the time to save everything from the garden and orchard and give to your hogs. If you have but little give that little and it will prove to be a big thing in the growth of your hogs. Don't let anything go to waste, it matters not how small. It will save your buying white sides next summer to make more seven and eight cents cotton.

Be sure you save all the hay you can and put up all the meat you will need for next year.

H. F. FREEMAN.

Wilson Co., N. C.

Terracing Land and Alfalfa Growing.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

The article on terracing in your last number is worth the price of a year's subscription. Hon. Pope Brown, of Georgia, remarked to me that "The man who invented terracing should have a bigger monument than any other Georgian."

The soil that is annually washed away from the hills of the Carolinas and Georgia would give, if coined into money, the farmer boys of every one of these States a first-class agricultural education, which, when applied back on the farms, would in ten years be of more value to their States than all the cotton mills and iron foundries therein.

Our friend who is troubled by his alfalfa seeming to die: it is simply nature's course. Cut it, and keeping cut it, just above the crowns, when first starting as fast as it gets eight inches high,

or even sooner. Top-dress with stable manure every winter. No better investment in agriculture. A man from Florida writes me to-day for a car-load of alfalfa hay; expects it will cost him \$30 per ton delivered to him in Ormond, Fla. Now, where is the man who wants that contract? Same party says his neighbors each want a car-load, and expect to have to send to Kansas for it. Why not your readers get this \$75 to \$100 per acre profit? C. W. I.

Farmers' Institute at Pittsboro.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

The opening of summer round of Farmers' Institutes at Pittsboro, Chatham County, on Saturday, the 16th instant, was encouraging.

Over a hundred were present at the opening, and Messrs. Massey, Butler and Williams each caught the attention of their audience, as evidenced by the fact that many practical questions came to them from different parts of the hall. The lecturers invited these questions and the farmers were not slow in making them.

Many more would doubtless have been present but for the fact that there has been considerable rain in this section and they thought best to kill hay while the sun was shining.

The Progressive Farmer is a popular paper among the farmers of Chatham. C.

Last Week's North Carolina Crop Bulletin.

Cotton continues to do well and is blooming freely. In the south-central counties, where the rains have been excessive, there are a number of complaints of lodged and weedy fields, and of a too rapid growth; some complaints of lice have been received from Bertie County; but elsewhere the crop is growing satisfactorily, even under the adverse weather conditions in the northeastern counties. Corn has a good healthy color and the stands are satisfactory; it is silking and tasseling, and is being worked the last time. Threshing wheat and oats is in full progress in the central and western districts with satisfactory results in regard to the yield and quality. The tobacco plant continues thrifty, although still backward in most places; topping is general in the western and central counties, while in the eastern counties curing has already begun. Watermelons are ripening, and a number of large shipments have been made from the eastern and southern counties; the quality of the melon is variable. The reports in regard to the fruit prospects are contradictory. Berries will be plentiful, while apples promise a small crop. The recent rains in the central counties have damaged considerable fruit; but the majority of the reports indicate a fair crop of grapes, peaches and plums. Gardens and minor crops are generally good.

Putting in Wheat.

Taking it for granted that all farmers, who are progressing somewhat, will prepare their land thoroughly for wheat, the next consideration is the method of sowing it. The drill is the best machine for putting in wheat and fertilizer at the same time. For the farmer who sows only three to eight acres that is expensive. The community ownership of a drill does not work well. The hiring of one is not always satisfactory. But if a farmer has land suited to the use of machinery and he sows forty to eighty acres in small grain, he can afford to buy a drill. Always get a disc drill, for the hoe drills are not satisfactory, except in land free from weeds and cotton and corn stalks. The 6-disc drill is better than a larger one, for it is lighter and more easily turned in corners around terraces. With it one may put in eighty acres daily. But the small farmer cannot afford to invest \$60 to \$75 in a drill to put in a few acres of wheat. Sowing by hand and covering with small shovels on a double foot plow stock, or with a cutaway harrow will secure

a good stand. By that method a small portion of the seed is lost, being left on the surface or covered too deep. But a good hand will get a regular stand and it often seems to do better sown that way than with a drill. The extra labor comes in when scattering the fertilizer by hand. But that is no great burden, as one can sow the fertilizer on an acre in an hour. The drill plants the seed so regularly that none of it is lost. That is one advantage. The other is the regular distribution of the fertilizer.—Selected.

Overdoing the Peach Growing Industry.

Editors Progressive Farmer:

Discouraging reports of the peach crop from California follow on the heels of the news that the peach industry is being overdone in Georgia. A few years ago, the great peach belt was in Delaware and Western Maryland. The recurrent frosts drove the industry farther South, and Georgia became the centre. A little later, California began to supply peaches, fresh and canned, to all the world. It is now estimated that the peach pack in that State will be only half the normal, while in the South, brown-rot and indiscriminate spraying have resulted in enormous losses. The fortunes that have been made in this fruit in Georgia have led practically the entire population, in certain sections, to set out peach trees, regardless of the lack of practical horticultural knowledge. It is stated by a pomologist of the Department of Agriculture that upwards of 6,000,000 trees have been planted in the last two seasons, and that the business is in danger of being overdone. He also reports that hundreds of thousands of trees have been killed by the use of oil—for the San Jose scale—in unseasonable weather and with pumps that worked irregularly. It is as dangerous, he points out, to use insecticides without the proper intelligence, as it would be to carelessly administer medicines to a human being.

W. H. TODD.

Washington, D. C.

Virginia Farming.

The Commissioner of Agriculture reports to us that agricultural conditions in Virginia are gradually improving. The farmers are getting out of the one crop system and are rotating their crops. Much of our soil is thin because of the one crop system of the past. The farmer has been taxing the land year after year to its full capacity and robbing it of its vegetable matter. But he is learning better. More than ever, soil improving crops are grown, such as cow peas, soy beans, vetches, clovers and grasses. These crops supply nitrogen and make humus. Every such crop makes the land that much more valuable.

The farmers are more and more giving attention to their live stock. Already the finest varieties of cattle and sheep are annually exported, and Virginia is destined to be one of the great live stock States of the country.

The fruit industry is increasing rapidly and many orchards bring small fortunes in a single crop, yielding the owner from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Virginia grows a great variety of fruits of the finest quality, and is fortunate in being located near the great markets of the East.

Virginia is also one of the largest trucking States in the Union. One of her counties now grows five per cent of the entire sweet potato crop of the United States. Our great trucking fields are extending each year further inland and the industry is gradually expanding. In short, Virginia grows a greater variety of crops than any other States. Anything except tropical plants can be produced here.

Many of our lands are still selling for less than their real value, but in all parts of the State prices are hardening, and in some sections have materially increased. The trouble is that Virginia has done little in the way of advertising, and outsiders do not understand what advantages we have and what bargains our lands are at present prices. However, the State has a splendid exhibit at St. Louis, and already there are practical results of which we shall speak hereafter.—Richmond Times.